/14 cont./

484 494 788 [497] number of persons transported. There are sometimes spectacular ones, but cases involving fatalities are fortunately very rare.

The transportation of the pilgrims is closely watched by the /15/ Administration. The Office of Railroads organizes special trains. The subdivision heads grant to the owners of the trucks special transportation authorizations. The circle /cercle, an administrative district/ of Diourbel, aided by the Senegal government, strengthens the security forces and highway police.

788 *795 But that is not the only problem which the organization and unfolding of the Magal presents for the Caliph-general and the Administration.

Sheltering all these people for three days and more is another. [485] The provisioning of the pilgrims in water and food must be organized; sanitary and medical service must be ensured; finally, it is necessary to ensure order and discipline in the city of Touba itself, as is done on the roads, and the commander of the circle of Diourbel can only accomplish this with sizable police reinforcements, set apart in advance almost everywhere (as far as Dakar and Kaolack), which are put at his disposal for this purpose. [625]

At the opening of the pilgrimage, three days before the Official Day, the crowd has reached its maximum size. Touba then experiences extraordinary activity. [494] The road between Touba and M'Backé is continually furrowed in both directions by files of trucks which run without respite between the two agglomerations. The station platforms disappear under the flood of pilgrims who disembark innumerably from the last trains. The wide avenues of the city are filled with the crowd of pilgrims who carry out their religious duties or stroll in front of the little flat baskets where, as in all pilgrimages in the world, the most diverse objects are sold, from articles of clothing, such as babouches or samaras, to perfumes and jewelry, including the most varied articles of piety: prayers or verses from the Koran printed in Arabic, photographs of the Caliph-general or of Amadou Bamba, or even pictures in Oriental [438] [443]